



Council of the  
European Union

Brussels, 30 November 2020  
(OR. en)

13457/20  
ADD 4

MI 532  
ENT 140  
ENV 754

#### COVER NOTE

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From: Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director

date of receipt: 16 November 2020

To: Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

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No. Cion doc.: SWD(2020) 267 final

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Subject: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION OF THE OUTDOOR NOISE DIRECTIVE 2000/14/EC accompanying the document Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation and administration of Directive 2000/14/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 May 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the noise emission in the environment by equipment for use outdoors

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Delegations will find attached document SWD(2020) 267 final.

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Encl.: SWD(2020) 267 final



Brussels, 16.11.2020  
SWD(2020) 267 final

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**  
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION**  
**OF THE OUTDOOR NOISE DIRECTIVE 2000/14/EC**

*Accompanying the document*

**Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council**  
**on the implementation and administration of Directive 2000/14/EC of the European**  
**Parliament and of the Council of 8 May 2000 on the approximation of the laws of the**  
**Member States relating to the noise emission in the environment by equipment for use**  
**outdoors**

{COM(2020) 715 final} - {SWD(2020) 266 final}

## Executive Summary

Directive 2000/14/EC on outdoor noise emission (“the Directive”) was adopted on 8 May 2000 and became applicable on 3 January 2002. It merged seven specific product directives and two directives on test procedures. The Directive aims to ensure the free movement of outdoor equipment; reduce permissible noise levels for such equipment in order to protect the health and well-being of citizens as well as the environment; and provide information to the public on the noise emitted by such equipment in order to promote less noisy equipment and improve customer choice.

The Directive sets out detailed noise measurement methods and test codes (by referring to European and international standards); harmonised noise limits for a definite list of equipment; conformity assessment procedures; and marking requirements.

The Directive covers 57 types of equipment used outdoors defined in Annex I, out of which it establishes noise limits for 22 types (Article 12) and requires a specific noise marking for all equipment types (Article 13). Such equipment can be grouped into eight clusters: cleaning, construction, gardening, loading and lifting, power generators and cooling, pumping and suction, snowmobiles and snow groomers, and waste collection, processing and recycling. The majority of equipment is used by professional users.

The evaluation covers the performance of the Directive in the period from 2002 to 2018 in the EU Members States, EFTA and Turkey. It assesses the Directive’s effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value. It takes into consideration the responses and feedback received from sectoral stakeholders and interested parties, in particular from economic operators (manufacturers of outdoor equipment, importers, distributors and others), users (workers and consumers) and citizens exposed to noise emission.

The key findings and conclusions can be summarised as follows.

In terms of **effectiveness**, the Directive has succeeded in meeting its objectives. The evaluation found that the Directive has helped to reduce the noise emission levels of outdoor equipment over the last 20 years; it has simplified the pre-existing legal framework and prevented the emergence of different regulations at national level that could have been an obstacle for the free movement of goods in the internal market; citizens are better protected as compared to how they would have been without the Directive.

However, the legal provisions in the Directive proved insufficient to motivate consumers to buy less noisy equipment. There is still a lack of knowledge and awareness about noise emissions, and the noise marking alone is not enough to drive consumer choice.

Despite the low market demand for quieter equipment, the Directive forced manufacturers to invest resources in the R&D of special designs, mechanisms and strategies to reduce noise emissions of outdoor equipment. This is in particular the case of equipment subject to mandatory noise limits (Article 12), while for equipment subject to noise marking only (Article 13), the Directive was not sufficient to encourage manufacturers to develop less noisy products to the same degree.

As regards **efficiency**, the Directive produced significant health and environmental benefits. Stakeholders also observe the positive impact of ensuring harmonised regulation within the

EU, while expressing some concern over the effect of stricter noise limits inside than outside the EU. Overall, they do not perceive significant impact on their business in terms of internal or external trade.

Conformity assessment costs are the most significant ones, in particular, for companies that have to test separately for both the Directive and other EU legislation, more commonly the Machinery Directive. Research and development costs are also outlined, but they are compensated by the benefits resulting from more performant equipment. The “NOISE Application” database, while not particularly costly in terms of monetary spending, presents significant operational limitations.

Aspects of the Directive that could be improved in terms of efficiency are: the classification and grouping of products; the alignment of the measurement methods with the technological development; the addition of a clear and uniform procedure to determine the uncertainty value of the noise measurements which is required to calculate the guaranteed sound power level; the consideration of the possibility of an internal control procedure for certification (“self-assessment”) for equipment under Article 12; and the appointment of notified bodies that are competent to perform the requested conformity assessment procedures in some countries where they do not exist, in order to avoid to seek the needed expertise in other Member States.

Concerning the **relevance** of the Directive, the evaluation confirmed that its original objectives are as valid today as when it was first proposed.

Thanks to the Directive, noise emission levels expressed in sound power level decreased between 2 and 3 dB. Nevertheless, the increase in the number of outdoor equipment on the market and in use has had a counterbalancing impact on the positive effect of the Directive, renewing the need for pressure on the manufacturers to produce less noisy equipment. In the absence of market demand for quieter equipment, it is still up to the legislator to set limits to noise emissions for the outdoor equipment safeguarding wellbeing and health of citizens.

With regard to the industry, while the Directive addressed the need for harmonisation and legal certainty across the EU, from an international trade perspective, the stricter limits imposed by the Directive did not bring any significant advantage nor helped industry to comply with foreign legislation.

In terms of **coherence** and complementarity of the Directive with other EU legislation, some problems were identified for manufacturers. In particular, the fact that equipment in scope of the Directive is also subject to requirements under the Machinery Directive [2006/42/EC](#) mean that some equipment must be tested twice. In addition, it is difficult for some equipment to comply with both the Directive and the requirements of the Non-Road Mobile Machinery Regulation (EU) [2016/1628](#) on emissions.

Nonetheless, the evaluation recognised that the Directive is a coherent part of a wider, comprehensive network of environmental noise legislation in the EU. No major difficulties were identified in regard to the relationship between the Directive and extra-EU legislation.

Finally, concerning the **EU added value** of the Directive, the evaluation concludes that the Directive achieved a number of key objectives, which would not have been achieved without it.

In particular, the Directive prevented the proliferation of different national regulations, and noise levels decreased in the past twenty years, despite the lack of market demand. Without the Directive, given the absence of market pressure by consumers, it is likely that producers of outdoor equipment would have neglected the research on higher performance equipment regarding noise emissions in favour of other features.

Taking into account all the above, the outcome of the evaluation is positive: **the overall conclusion** is that the Directive is generally considered as effective, efficient, relevant and coherent, and has EU added value. In fact, the Directive simplified the existing legislative framework, thus bringing more clarity for all stakeholders. The Directive effectively contributed to reduce noise emission by outdoor equipment, and ensured that manufacturers invest resources in the research and development of special designs, mechanisms and strategies to reduce noise emissions of outdoor equipment. Given the lack of market demand for quieter equipment and the scarcity of national incentives, the Directive was and still is the primary force driving noise reduction for this type of equipment. In addition, given that the desired objectives can be best met at EU level, an EU approach remains the most appropriate response as opposed to national approaches.

Nevertheless, there are a number of critical aspects that affected the operation of the Directive. This concerns in particular the lack of adaptation to the technical progress of core elements of the Directive: scope, noise limits, noise measurement methods, conformity assessment procedures, collection of noise data and the alignment to the New Legislative Framework.

The Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts amending Annex III to adapt the methods of measurement of airborne noise to technical progress. The Commission has not yet exercised its right to amend Annex III.

Also, insufficient market surveillance is a factor undermining the effectiveness of the Directive, as it can lead to non-compliant equipment reaching the market and puts compliant manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage compared with those who ignore the legislation.

The results of the evaluation are intended to be used in view of a possible enactment of the empowerments foreseen in the Directive or future revision of the sectorial legislation on noise emission by outdoor equipment, within the EU strategy to reduce noise at source.